

**INTERPRETING SHADOWS:
ARMS CONTROL AND DEFENSE
PLANNING IN A RAPIDLY
CHANGING MULTI-POLAR
WORLD**

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FOREWORD

We are pleased to publish this twenty-sixth volume in the *Occasional Paper* series of the US Air Force Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). In it, Captain King questions the broadened relevance of traditional means and modes of arms control and nuclear deterrence within the current multi-polar world. He advocates a balancing approach to complex power relationships and a continuing emphasis on the arms control process. However, he suggests building that renewed effort around a new strategy centered on a "conventional triad" coupled with diplomacy. This kind of political-military strategic thinking warrants thoughtful consideration as we forge into a new security era. This specific recommendation may not be THE answer, but its presentation represents the kinds of questions we all need to ask.

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JAMES M. SMITH
Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

General Issue

Cold War thinking continues to guide United States' policy in the Post-Cold War environment. Continuing to pursue policies forged during the Cold War will not be adequate to address proliferation for two reasons. First, Cold War policies do not reflect changes in the world in respect to other major or regional powers. Second, current policies overlook potential long-term counterproductive consequences. Adopting an overarching national policy on arms control will require understanding different world views of the United States, other major powers, and regional powers.

World Views

American foreign policy advocates hold several different worldviews. Consensus behind the Cold War policies of containment and nuclear deterrence was the result of an overwhelming threat and not consensus on an underlying worldview. American worldviews can be divided into at least six categories:

- *Domestic Focus*--advocates reducing defense expenditures to focus on domestic issues and increasing economic competitiveness.
- *Balance of Power*--views international relations as being based on competing national objectives where nations try to avoid a single nation dominating the international stage or strategic areas.
- *Global Leadership*--advocates the United States pursue policies that would forestall a return to a balance of power and maintain sole superpower status.
- *International Norms*--views increased interdependence and shared norms as a method of decreasing conflict.
- *Spread of Western Values*--advocates the United States promote

the universal values of liberal democracy and market economies, because of a belief that a world based on these values would be a better place.

- *Autonomy*--advocates the United States taking more unilateral action where visions of transforming the world are replaced by pragmatic flexibility.

Russia and China are the two most important countries for the United States to consider in the Post-Cold World because of their size, military power, and economic potential. Both Russia and China desire a larger international role and already possess veto power in the United Nations Security Council. This desire is leading both nations to pursue policies for domestic and international reasons that do not support American initiatives. Additionally, both countries have internal problems. Negotiations with Russia and China without considering their views will have limited success. Of particular interest for arms control initiatives is that both nations are assisting regional nations in developing nuclear and ballistic missile technology. In the case of India and Pakistan, Russia and China are supplying material and technology to each side respectively.

Regional powers are concerned about increased activism by the United States because intervention in internal conflicts threatens their sovereignty. Regional nations may conclude that possessing weapons of mass destruction is the only way of deterring major powers from becoming involved in their affairs. When there is an international crisis, it is important to realize that even when the crisis is an external event for a regional power, its root cause is more often a function of internal problems; therefore, the stakes to the regional leader are higher. This leads to an asymmetry of stakes where the leaders of a regional power are fighting for their survival, making them harder to deter. An important consideration is that regional leaders can perceive the risk of

not taking action as higher than risking action. In summary, regional powers may act in seemingly irrational ways that can be rational when the perspective of the regional leadership is taken into account.

A Case for Balance of Power

When consideration is made for the views of major and regional powers, the balance of power worldview appears the most descriptive of what is happening. Balance of power better explains the lack of a unifying strategy in Post-Cold War America because the multi-polar environment does not directly threaten the continued survival of the United States. In fact, a single overarching policy may be inappropriate for today's decentralized world. Additionally, historical evidence indicates that balances of power recurrently form and become evident when one nation acquires over half of the coercive capability in the international system. For example, the United States was expected to dominate the post-World War II world; however, the Soviet Union emerged as an antagonist. Similarly, the United States currently enjoys dominance in world affairs and this is leading other nations to balance our influence.

Current Arms Control Policies

In reviewing current policy options some key findings emerge. First, the United States needs to develop closer relationships with countries that will have an impact on key regions. Key considerations in building these relationships are that the country has a similar government, an open economy, a professional military, and adequate infrastructure to support joint military exercises. Second, deterrence is still required, but nuclear deterrence by the United States is less credible and counterproductive to non-proliferation. The result is that conventional deterrence needs to be developed and demonstrated. Additionally, the role of the Air Force will probably increase in scenarios with regional powers possessing weapons of mass destruction because of their quick deployment and long-range precision-strike capabilities. Third, economic sanctions are ineffective

and hurt the population and not the leaders they are targeted against. There may be situations where multilateral sanctions would be appropriate; however, the United States should discontinue implementing unilateral economic sanctions. Fourth, export controls have been used to limit proliferation and support the Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, more can be done to limit the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons through unilateral and multilateral export controls. Fifth, military assistance, when provided, needs to focus more on infrastructure development and deal less with weapon system sales. Building a nation's infrastructure has the dual purpose of aiding their economy and facilitating joint military exercises. Finally, confidence-building measures need to be given the status of a serious diplomatic initiative because the success of confidence-building measures requires the same consideration and effort as other options discussed.

A New Framework

The focus of arms control is changing. It now deals with issues affecting all nations and not just the super powers. A new framework for approaching non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and arms control could focus on a two-fold policy initiative. The first policy would be a new strategic "triad" built around conventional capability including rapidly deployable forces, regional ballistic missile defense, and long-range precision-strike capability. The second policy would employ an information strategy using the current diplomatic initiatives that appear to be the most productive, or unilateral and multilateral export controls, military assistance in the form of infrastructure, and confidence building measures.

Conclusion

The world is a much different place after the Cold War, and continued success requires abandoning Cold War policies. Emerging policies will

need to appreciate different worldviews in the United States and other nations. Following a balance of power orientation will allow policy makers to tailor policies to different challenges without being restricted by an overarching tenet. Good intelligence will be a key factor in the success of any policy orientation and its implementation. Arms control remains important in the Post-Cold War world, but its focus needs to change from arms control involving the superpowers to arms control for everyone. If the United States is not proactive in influencing other nations, others with ideas potentially adverse to American interests will fill that role. A potential framework for arms control policies involving a conventional triad and diplomatic initiatives is suggested to stimulate discussion.

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